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Summary record of the 235th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 30 March 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Cisternas Reyes

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties to the Convention under article 35 (*continued*)

Initial report of Portugal (continued) (CRPD/C/PRT/1; CRPD/C/PRT/Q/1 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Portugal took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 11-20

2. **Ms. Antunes** (Portugal) said that the budget approved for 2017 included increased funding specifically for disability-related issues, which was a priority area for the Government. Special social assistance supplements were made available to families with children or dependent persons with disabilities. Those families also benefited from tax relief. Clearer budget guidelines had been drafted for government services spending the sums allocated to supporting persons with disabilities.

3. There had been a significant increase in the budget allocated to civil society organizations by the National Institute for Rehabilitation. Funding was allocated to cover the operational expenses of civil society organizations as well as to support community-based projects in a wide range of areas such as employability, sport and culture for all, research and education. The concept of independent living had only recently been put into practice in Portugal, and only two projects had been implemented. The first had been an individual project for a person with multiple sclerosis, had lasted for a period of five years and had been successful. The second had been initiated in 2015 by the Lisbon city council in conjunction with a number of civil society organizations. It aimed to support independent living among a larger number of persons with disabilities. A significant amount of European Union funding was available for independent living projects, and it was planned to continue to develop them in the future. The application system for funding needed to be harmonized, as the definition of independent living differed significantly from one civil society organization to another. In some cases, funding would be granted directly to the persons with disabilities, who would then recruit their own personal assistants. While that approach was appropriate for persons with certain disabilities, in other cases the civil society organizations would be required to play a more active role in the projects. The Government was finalizing draft legislation on the definition of independent living so as to facilitate implementation of such projects.

4. **Ms. Chamiça** (Portugal) said that in 2015 Portugal had adopted legislation on civil protection, and that it was specially tailored to meet the needs of disabled persons by providing a holistic response in the event of emergencies. The legislation thus complied with article 11 of the Convention. The pilot project on civil protection in the Algarve had been useful for the formulation of the new law. With regard to migrants, the Foreigners and Borders Service provided assistance to foreign citizens with disabilities to help them regularize their stay in the country. Over 1,100 persons with disabilities had benefited from the programme in 2014.

5. **Ms. Castello-Branco** (Portugal) said that in the Portuguese legal framework, legal capacity was viewed as the norm and legal incapacity as the exception to that norm. Legal capacity could only be restricted, either partially or fully, in accordance with the relevant legislation. When persons with disabilities were deemed unable to determine the legality of their actions, they were not held legally responsible for the commission of unlawful acts; they were instead subject to hospitalization or other appropriate security measures.

6. Legal protection was guaranteed to persons with disabilities by the State, as confirmed by numerous rulings from the Constitutional Court, which had upheld the principle of non-discrimination, and local courts had issued rulings against discrimination based on disability, for example in the insurance sector. In the Ministry of Justice, 2.5 per cent of all employees were persons with disabilities, over half of whom were women. Training on the rights of persons with disabilities was provided to members of the judiciary and prison staff.

7. When persons with disabilities were required to provide testimony in court, appropriate facilities were made available. For example, the Code of Criminal Procedure required that a sign language interpreter be made available if a deaf person gave testimony in a court hearing. If an interpreter was not available, the hearing was postponed. Sign language was also specifically protected by the Constitution in its article on education. Training materials on sign language were used by the Centre for Judicial Studies, which was the training school for members of the judiciary, and projects had also been carried out in the prison system to promote the use of sign language. Specific measures were provided for by laws, such as the law providing for the protection of witnesses, to ensure that criminal proceedings were adapted accordingly for persons with disabilities. There were no restrictions on legal capacity in Portugal. Deprivation of liberty was only permitted in accordance with the law and in particularly serious circumstances.

8. **Ms. Antunes** (Portugal) said that there were a number of practising lawyers in Portugal who were persons with disabilities, including some who were blind. While there was no legal impediment to the recruitment of persons with disabilities in the judiciary, to the best of her knowledge none had applied for such positions. The emergency telephone number, 118, was being adapted to provide a parallel sign language interpretation service. There were plans to introduce similar initiatives for all public services in the future.

9. **Ms. Redinha** (Portugal) said that detention facilities were monitored and inspected by independent bodies. The health authorities had the right to visit detention facilities, including those holding persons with disabilities, and were able to report violations of inmates' rights. The Office of the Ombudsman also functioned as the national human rights institution and carried out visits to a wide range of facilities, including shelters, prisons and psychiatric hospitals. Since Portugal's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Office of the Ombudsman had also acted as the national preventive mechanism under that instrument and had carried out more frequent inspections, visiting over 70 different facilities since 2014.

10. **Mr. Madeira Serôdio** (Portugal) said that the Government had no knowledge of any reports of torture or inhuman treatment of persons with disabilities in prisons. Persons with disabilities were treated the same as other inmates and subject to the same regulations, including with regard to disciplinary measures. They were entitled to visit a doctor twice a week, and any disciplinary actions that were applied to persons with disabilities were subject to review within 72 hours.

11. **Ms. Antunes** (Portugal) said that the disciplinary measures in question were not imposed by the justice system but were applied by the prison authorities. The delegation had no information on the application of such measures to persons with disabilities.

12. **Ms. Ferreira** (Portugal) said that there were independent monitoring and inspection mechanisms in place for all facilities providing services to persons with disabilities so as to ensure compliance with the applicable legislation and procedures, as well as with the individual regulations of the specific institution in question, and to record any instances of abuse or mistreatment. If there was any suspicion of mistreatment, the matter was referred to the Public Prosecutor's Office.

13. **Mr. Teixeira** (Portugal) said that all educational establishments, both public and private, were inspected once every four years. Inclusive education was one of the areas assessed. The inspectors had received special training and in 2016 would focus on inclusive education during their inspections. Students and their parents or guardians were also able to lodge complaints with the inspection authorities at any time, which could result in disciplinary measures or on-site inquiries. Some 95 per cent of all State schools receiving funding to promote health carried out campaigns to prevent inter-peer violence among students, including violence against persons with disabilities.

14. **Ms.** Filipa **Pereira** (Portugal) said that the Criminal Code prescribed that informed consent could only be provided on a voluntary basis by individuals over 16 years of age. The performance of an abortion without the consent of the pregnant woman was punishable by imprisonment of 2 to 8 years. Voluntary sterilization, in accordance with the law on sexual education and family planning, was only permitted for persons over the age of 25, with their written consent. The age limit did not apply when sterilization was carried out for medical reasons. The Mental Health Law provided that patients had the right to refuse any medical intervention, except in the event of emergencies or compulsory admission to hospital when the life of the individual in question or that of a third party would otherwise be at risk. Compulsory admission was defined in the law as admission by judicial order of a person suffering from a serious psychiatric disorder and was only possible if it was proportional to the degree of danger posed by the situation in question. The same law also stated that mental health care was to be provided mainly at the local level, in order to avoid removal and to promote the rehabilitation and social inclusion of the patients. Compulsory outpatient services were always favoured, wherever possible, over hospital admission. In any case, judicial authorization was required.

15. **Ms. Redinha** (Portugal) underscored that the guiding principle for any surgical procedure involving a disabled person was free and informed consent. However, if a disabled person was deemed to be unable to understand the situation, a guardian or a parent could be appointed to take decisions involving complex procedures, for example sterilization or tissue or organ donation. The appointment of such a representative had to be approved by a multidisciplinary team of doctors, as well as by a judge.

16. **Ms. Chamiça** (Portugal) said that in 2014 over 32,000 applications for Portuguese nationality had been received. In 2014, nearly 400,000 foreign migrants had been registered, of whom 51 per cent had been women and 10 per cent had been children. The telephone helpline for assisting foreigners to register as migrants had received 247,000 calls in 2014. Some 214 refugees, none of whom had disabilities, had been resettled in 2014. Another 170 persons had also been resettled, some of whom had minor mobility disabilities.

17. **Ms. Ferreira** (Portugal), with regard to the use of European Union funding to support community-based living for disabled persons, indicated that the Social Security Institute provided seven types of services to persons with disabilities, five of which prioritized keeping those persons in their communities, while two provided for placement in institutional settings. Between 2012 and 2015, some 5,900 placements had been made, of which 67 per cent had been in the community and 33 per cent in residential facilities. Some 64 per cent of the available budget was used to fund community placements and 36 per cent for institutional placements.

18. **Ms. Palma** (Portugal) said that as part of the rural development programme co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Government had implemented programmes to improve basic services for the rural population in such areas as inclusive childcare, home support, transportation, information technology, drop-in centres, tourism and leisure facilities and accessible watercraft. In addition, as part of the common agriculture policy, fruit and milk were provided free of charge to children, including disabled children, in all schools in the country.

19. **Ms. Antunes** (Portugal) said that one example of a special education measure was that examinations were adapted to the functional capacity of the child. The rural development programme provided for special measures for persons with disabilities living in rural settings. Municipal services included accessible and inclusive childcare. Persons with disabilities could lodge complaints regarding discrimination with the National Institute for Rehabilitation or could take their cases directly to court.

20. A number of measures had been adopted to promote the right of disabled persons to vote: disabled persons were consulted on the choice of accessible polling stations; funding was available for transportation to the polling station; the parliament was considering a bill to allow for Braille ballots; and the right to deny a person the right to vote on the grounds of legal incapacity was reserved only for judges.

21. The Secretariat of State for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the National Institute for Rehabilitation allocated €350,000 per year to the weekly "With you" television programme. New safety programmes for the disabled were being developed, and disability-related protocols had been drawn up for the police. Awareness of disability issues was being promoted in the schools. There were competitions and prizes to encourage municipalities to adapt infrastructure, for example by ensuring the accessibility of public and private facilities, including beaches and shopping centres. Prizes were also awarded for physical and technological accessibility measures.

Articles 21-33

22. **Mr. Tatić** asked whether the Committee could be provided with the texts of the rulings in which the Constitutional Court had invoked the Convention. With regard to article 24, he requested information on the budget allocated to reasonable accommodation measures for the vast majority of children with disabilities who attended the regular school system, as compared to the overall budget for the school system. Turning to article 29, he asked whether election campaigns were accessible to persons with disabilities. For example, were televised debates provided with captioning and sign language interpretation? He would welcome further information on the system of awards handed out in recognition of accessibility measures taken at the municipal level and asked whether the State party networked with other European Union countries to share experiences relating to accessibility.

23. **Mr. Babu** enquired about the degree of accessibility of recreational, leisure and historic sites.

24. **Ms. Quan-Chang** asked how much funding the Santa Casa Misericórdia de Lisboa institution received from the national lottery, what proportion of that funding was allocated to services for persons with disabilities, whether organizations of persons with disabilities were involved in the work of the institution and to what extent the Government oversaw its programme delivery to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities were met. She requested information on the effects of the economic crisis on efforts to help persons with disabilities. For example, was assistance provided for persons affected by closures of facilities, including psychiatric hospitals, who might have little support or even be homeless? Lastly, she asked what plans the State party had to establish an independent mechanism to implement the Convention and how it planned to involve organizations of persons with disabilities in the establishment and functioning of that mechanism.

25. **Ms. Pavey** welcomed the efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture to promote inclusive development projects and tourism as a tool for rural development. She asked for more information on those efforts, with a view to sharing Portugal's experience with the representatives of other States. How much funding was received from the European Union for such programmes? Was information about such projects shared with other Governments?

26. **Mr. Buntan** noted that according to the State party, legal representatives were provided for persons with disabilities in legal or medical situations where they were deemed incapable of representing themselves. A better solution would be to provide support for the individuals in question so that they might take their own decisions. Were sign language and Braille accepted for use in official transactions, including in court? Did sign language have the status of a national language? He welcomed that fact that nearly all children with disabilities attended regular schools. What measures were taken and what funding was available, in addition to the special education allowance, to make schools truly inclusive? He also requested information on how the special school system could be reformed to serve as resource centres on disability issues for regular schools. Lastly, the delegation should provide information on steps taken to reform domestic law, including copyright law, with a view to ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

27. **Mr. Ruskus** noted that while 75 per cent of the general population was employed, the employment rate was just 50 per cent for persons with disabilities, and 43 per cent for women with disabilities. Furthermore, persons with disabilities tended to have stereotyped and low-income jobs and generally did not work in inclusive workplaces. He asked for information on measures to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in both the public and private sectors.

28. **Ms. Degener** recalled the obligation of the State party to develop statistics and collect data. The delegation had provided adequate information in the area of education. Did the State Party have any plans to improve the collection of comprehensive data, disaggregated by gender and age, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals?

29. **Mr. Lovászy** requested information on the results of the Ombudsman's review of accessibility and on any further steps envisaged in that area. Specifically, were courtrooms accessible, and what types of accessibility measures had been implemented in the State party? Did participants in civil cases before the courts, for example relating to divorce questions or property matters, have access to sign language interpretation? Was funding available for that service? He requested more data on inclusive education measures for deaf and hard-of-hearing students and on bilingual education. How many students were in segregated and regular education institutions and how many students with disabilities attended university?

30. **Ms. Kingston** expressed concern about the State party's use of legal representatives for persons with disabilities who were deemed to have reduced legal capacity. The State party seemed to be conflating legal capacity and mental capacity. She recalled that the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2014) on article 12, addressing equal recognition before the law, emphasized that persons with disabilities enjoyed legal capacity on an equal basis with others. While it might be acceptable to appoint someone to assist a person with disabilities, the individual most suited to interpret the person's will and preference would most likely be someone close to him or her, not a judge or psychiatrist.

31. Had austerity measures had any negative effect on income supports available to persons with disabilities? She asked whether the 1995 survey on the situation of persons with disabilities would be updated. She expressed concern at the delegation's reference to measures to prevent disability. The Convention was aimed at meeting their needs, not at preventing their disabilities. She asked how committed the State party was to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Lastly, noting that one of the members of the independent mechanism on disability issues was a member of parliament, she enquired what role that person would play, bearing in mind that the mechanism was supposed to be independent.

32. **Mr. Basharu** requested information on measures to train health-care workers to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities, for example by teaching them sign language. How much political and voting information was accessible to the blind and deaf? What measures were implemented to enable them to exercise their right to vote at polling stations?

33. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik asked what financial and technical support had been provided in order to strengthen vocational training for persons with disabilities, how the impact of that support was measured and what had been done to guarantee equal employment opportunities. He asked the delegation to provide examples of multiple discrimination in the field of employment, in particular with regard to women with disabilities. The information provided on employment did not cover the issues of fair pay, entitlement to the minimum wage, relations with other workers, discrimination against women workers with disabilities and respect for the principle of reasonable accommodation. He asked whether steps had been taken to harmonize the terminology used in the fields of education, employment, health, vocational training, transport, and sports and leisure. To what extent had the national authorities used the 2001 census data to guide the development of policies for the implementation of the Convention?

34. **Mr. Langvad** said that the disabilities of prisoners should be taken into account when disciplinary sanctions were imposed on them. He would welcome information on any increases in the financial benefits provided to cover extra expenditures arising from disability and on any steps taken to extend such coverage. Why did the authorities have the power to deprive persons with disabilities of their right to vote? It would be useful to have further information on the scope of competence of both the Office of the Ombudsman and the independent mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

35. **Mr. You** Liang asked for additional information on the Paralympic Winter Games movement in Portugal. He asked whether the State party had put in place a national plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regard to the disability issues addressed therein, and whether a specific body was responsible for addressing those issues.

36. **Mr. Pyaneandee** asked how the State party intended to reform and strengthen its independent monitoring mechanism, celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Convention and pay tribute to the work of organizations of persons with disabilities.

37. **Mr. Al-Tarawneh** asked whether refugees were included among the 1,100 foreigners with disabilities who had benefited from assistance provided by the Foreigners and Borders Service, to what extent migrants and foreign nationals were covered by domestic health and education policies, whether there were special laws in place on the status of foreign nationals and refugees with disabilities and whether the Government distinguished between non-disabled refugees and refugees with disabilities.

38. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** (Country Rapporteur) asked when the State party intended to regulate the training of sign language and tactile fingerspelling interpreters and what role the national Braille commission played in that regard. She asked whether the Civil Code would be revised to enable all persons with disabilities to marry and take on parental responsibilities. The Committee would welcome information on how children with disabilities living in institutions were included in adoption programmes and on any problems encountered in their direct transition to family life. What measures had been taken to prevent bullying of children with disabilities in mainstream schools? She asked whether steps would be taken to enable blind persons to access physiotherapy training. The delegation should describe measures taken to speed up the process of providing technical assistance to persons with disabilities, to support them in their decision-making and exercise of informed consent and to ensure access to employment for deaf and blind

persons and persons with autism. Did the Government intend to allow persons living in institutions to exercise their right to vote? She asked how many hours of the 2016 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games would be televised and how the State party directly supported persons with disabilities and their organizations in Portuguese-speaking African countries. It would also be of interest to know whether the National Institute for Rehabilitation or the Secretariat of State for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities had direct links with the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa institution and to what extent it took into account the principles and mandate of the Convention in its work.

39. **The Chair** asked what percentage of persons with disabilities accessed rehabilitation services in Portugal.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12 noon.

40. **Ms. Antunes** (Portugal) said that the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa institution was a private sector social solidarity agency that carried out a number of tasks formerly performed by the Lisbon-based Institute of Social Security and that benefited from lottery funds. The Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security managed the majority of the revenue generated by the lottery, channelling part of it towards projects for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

41. Regardless of their legal status, all refugees residing in Portugal enjoyed the same fundamental rights as Portuguese citizens. No distinction was made between non-disabled refugees and refugees with disabilities, and their children had full access to education and health-care services. There were guarantees in place to ensure equality for persons with disabilities in terms of the right to vote, and Braille ballots would shortly be introduced. Only those persons who had been declared legally incapable by the courts were barred from voting. Sign language interpreting was provided in the case of all televised and many untelevised electoral debates. During the recent presidential elections, political leaflets had been provided to voters in a number of formats, including Braille. Portuguese Sign Language had official status under the national Constitution. Braille enjoyed long-standing legal recognition, and efforts were ongoing to increase the production of reading material in that format through new legislation. Since 2003 there had been designated parking spaces reserved for persons with serious physical or motor disabilities, and plans were being made to extend that arrangement to cover persons with developmental disorders or organ impairments.

42. **Mr. Teixeira** (Portugal) said that, notwithstanding the difficulties faced in the adjustment process, the national education authorities had spent an extra €1.4 million on adaptation measures. The number of students with special needs had risen, but there had been no proportionate increase in funding. However, with the change of Government, a number of benefits that had previously been suspended had been reintroduced, thus strengthening inclusive education.

43. **Mr. Cunha** (Portugal) said that 98.7 per cent of children with special education needs had been integrated into mainstream schools. In total, €224 million had been invested in inclusive education, €16.8 million of which had been earmarked for the 1,000 or so children who did not attend mainstream public schools. Therefore, around 7 per cent of the inclusive education budget was set aside for special needs institutions, while the remaining 93 per cent was used for inclusive education. The first institutions for children with special education needs had been set up some 40 years previously by civil society organizations. In 2009, those organizations had signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education on the transfer of such children to mainstream schools. Since then, many of those institutions, which had acquired a great deal of expertise, had become resource centres. There were currently 90 centres providing inclusive education-related support to students, schools and families. The aim was to focus on the adaptation of the educational setting rather than the

rehabilitation of individuals. Materials had been produced setting out the roles of the various actors involved in the inclusive education process. The number of students learning Portuguese Sign Language had fallen to 488, owing to an increase in the number of persons opting for cochlear implants. In 2014, the number of students with severe, moderate or slight hearing impairment had stood at 1,436. Some 98 per cent of schools took specific health and protection measures to address the issue of violence, including bullying of students with disabilities. The Ministry of Education also conducted campaigns on that subject, and materials focusing on that issue were available in a variety of formats in school libraries nationwide.

44. **Ms.** Filipa **Pereira** (Portugal) said that, under the national mental health plan, the number of patients in psychiatric hospitals had been cut by 40 per cent, and only three such hospitals remained. Several mental health wards had been opened in general hospitals, along with community services for persons with severe intellectual disabilities and mental health-care units for minors. There were currently 41 mental health-care departments in general hospitals. Work was currently ongoing to put in place a national, integrated, continuous care network for persons with mental impairments.

45. **Ms. Costa** (Portugal) said that, in order to promote access for persons with disabilities to higher education, 2 per cent of the total places in every institution or course were reserved for students with motor or sensory impairments. The quota system was monitored by a body of experts appointed by the Government. Of the 156 eligible students who had applied for admission for the 2015/16 academic year, 120 had been awarded a place. The higher education system did not systematically collect data on the number of students with special needs who attended university. However, the statistics that were available indicated that their number was on the rise. The Ministry of Education was engaged in discussions with higher education establishments and other stakeholders to identify additional measures to further increase the number of students with disabilities who reached university.

46. **Mr. Conceição** (Portugal) said that vocational training institutions were eligible for extra funding to provide the services and assistive devices required for them to teach students with disabilities, including sign language instruction. Students who, owing to a disability, did not meet the usual requirements for a training course were given a customized programme, which was submitted to the National Employment and Vocational Training Institute for approval. A measure had recently been adopted allowing adults who acquired a disability to undergo retraining, and work had begun with some individuals who had experienced brain trauma. A number of measures had also been taken to provide persons with disabilities with equal access to employment, in particular by ensuring improved access to career counselling services, local job centres and vocational training institutes. Visually impaired persons and individuals with autism spectrum disorders received personalized job search assistance, which often involved dispelling the preconceived notions of employers about the capabilities of persons with disabilities. Workplace accommodations were ultimately the responsibility of the employer, although State funding was available to offset the cost. Improvement efforts notwithstanding, access to public services by persons with disabilities was not always easy. Such access depended on the awareness of the persons providing them with the service.

47. **Ms. Projeto** (Portugal) said that a series of social security benefits were available specifically for persons with disabilities, including a tuition grant and a caregiver allowance. The benefits were currently being revised with a view to possibly combining the various allowances into a single benefit.

48. **Mr. Pacheco** (Portugal) said that the support provided to persons with disabilities consisted of social benefits and disbursements under the pension system, neither of which had been negatively affected by austerity measures. In fact, the number of beneficiaries had

increased. While the measures in place predated the ratification of the Convention, efforts were being made to identify households with persons with disabilities and to ensure that they received the highest possible benefit for their particular situation. Certain social benefits had become subject to means testing since 2010. However, means testing did not apply to benefits for persons with disabilities.

49. **Mr. Madeira Serôdio** (Portugal) said that Portugal would be sending athletes to take part in seven disciplines at the 2016 Paralympics Games in Rio de Janeiro, and athletes would also take part in the 2017 Deaflympics. Participation in the winter Paralympic Games was being discussed.

50. **Mr. Conceição** (Portugal) added that, while Portugal was not renowned as a country of winter sports, State assistance was available for those who wished to practise one and the Sports for All programme encouraged participation in all types of sports.

51. **Mr. Cunha** (Portugal) said that there was a national school sports programme and that all schools offered physical education and other sports activities. Considerable efforts were being made to adapt sports activities to children with disabilities and to increase the number of teams that included special needs players. In the past two years, there had been a 20 per cent rise in the number of students with disabilities taking part in school sports.

52. **Mr. Teixeira** (Portugal) said that the national broadcaster would be providing coverage of the Paralympic Games on two domestic channels and one international channel. All coverage would include sign language interpretation.

53. **Mr. Madeira Serôdio** (Portugal) said that the 2011 census had been conducted using indicators developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and that a working group of the national statistics office had defined disability indicators. The country would thus be able to present disaggregated data in the future.

54. **Ms. Ávila** (Portugal) said that planning for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals included a needs assessment, the analysis of existing policies and measures and the appointment of goal-specific focal points. That process had already begun, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

55. **Ms. Antunes** (Portugal) said that civil society organizations had the authority to prescribe assistive devices because they were often in the best position to accurately determine the needs of the persons concerned. However, it was the relevant government authorities that financed the devices. Efforts were under way to clear the backlog of requests for goods and equipment used by persons with disabilities by the end of 2016. Changes would be made to the prescription process so that daily-use products could be delivered more efficiently. Portugal had a long history of providing international assistance in the areas of rehabilitation and empowerment, with a large part of the aid given to Timor-Leste and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. For example, €1.4 million had been earmarked for building special facilities for persons with disabilities in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. It had not been possible to hold the first meeting of the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention prior to the dialogue with the Committee, owing to the protracted recruitment process. However, a team of 10 had been appointed, including 6 individuals named by civil society organizations.

56. She thanked the Committee for its help in the lead-up to the interactive dialogue and the country's international partners for their role in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in Portugal.

57. **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, supported by **the Chair**, thanked the delegation for what had been a very positive and candid dialogue.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.